

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

22nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2003

HINCHEY URGES DEC TO INSIST ON STRONGER PROTECTIONS FOR HUDSON RIVER AT POWER PLANT

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today released comments he submitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) concerning the operation of the Danskammer power plant on the Hudson River in the Town of Newburgh. Hinchey urged a DEC administrative law judge to insist on thorough consideration of technologies that minimize environmental impacts before granting a permit to the plant's operators.

"The federal Clean Water Act explicitly states that cooling systems at power plants must reflect the best technology available to minimize adverse environmental impact," said Hinchey. "The DEC has acknowledged that closed-cycle cooling systems provide a much more substantial reduction in a generating plant's negative environmental impacts than the 'once-through' method proposed in the permit application. So by law the state must fully examine the feasibility of implementing the better system. It's vitally important for the health of the Hudson River."

Danskammer has been operated with an expired State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit since the permit lapsed in 1992. The facility continues to withdraw up to approximately 457 million gallons of water from the Hudson River each day, killing a large number of fish eggs, larvae and adult fish while returning heated water to the river. Prompted by lawsuits, DEC in November 2002 initiated a modification of the previously filed renewal application for the SPDES permit to require reduction of impacts on Hudson River fish. While the proposed changes would make some improvement, they fall far short of what could be accomplished with a closed-cycle cooling system.

All public comments on the proposed modification must be postmarked by Monday, August 11. Details can be found at the DEC's web site:

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/ohms/notices/danskammer.htm>.